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NEW FOOTBALL COMES OF AGE

10 YEARS IN THE MAKING



Photo: ALI ERHAN

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Ten Years In - The birth of new football

T Joshua Hercus

en years ago Australia launched a brand new football league to replace the old National Soccer League, it originally consisted of 7 Australian sides and one from across the aisle in New Zealand.

At the time there were great hopes but with basically brand new teams formed in most cases no one was sure if these sides would be able to bring both the old NSL supporters on board as well as engage in new ways with a wider Australian sporting public.

From day one Sydney FC were to become know as 'Bling FC' with Dwight Yorke leading the club to the

opening grand final win.

Melbourne Victory another of the foundation clubs were able to garner tremendous support in their home city with a packed Etihad Stadium seeing a massive 6 -1 win over Adelaide United in the grand final of season two.

The next year saw the league come to for in Asia with Adelaide United making it all the way to the final. In the domestic competition the Newcastle Jets became the third different champion in a grand final which will never be forgotten.

Melbourne Victory once again took out the championship in the 2008-09 season becoming the first





multiple champions, the league also went from strength to strength with the introduction of the W League and National Youth league.

Not wanting to be out done by the Victory, Sydney FC managed to level up the championship totals with their second victory.

The season also saw the introduction of the North Queensland Fury and Gold Coast sides and the larger then life Clive Palmer began to make his impact on the game.

Brisbane Roar finally broke through for their first championship as the league expanded out to 11 sides with the introduction of Melbourne Heart.

It was also the year our league was able to witness one of its best ever player in Thomas Broich dominate the league.

Brisbane were also the first side in A League history to go back to back with another championship win under the current Socceroos manager Ange Postecoglou.

2013 saw the introduction of one of the leagues big success stories in Western Sydney Wanderers under the guidance of Tony Popovic making it all to the grand final. It was however the first time that Central Coast managed to be able win the championship after previously being runner up on three separate occasions.

Last season we saw the first three time champion crowned with Brisbane Roar and the beautiful passing game dominating.

Throughout the past we have had many highs and quality players from the likes of Juninho, Robbie Fowler, Harry Kewell and Alessandro Del Piero and also some low lights with the demise of three sides and other have some ownership problems but the league can be proud of how far it has come heading into its tenth year. Hopefully this season of the beautiful game can help football keep growing strong in this country.

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HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE 2014/15 SEASON DRAW



ROUND 1 - 5

ROUND	DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	TIME	
					LOCAL	AEDT
1	Friday 10 October	Melbourne Victory	Western Sydney Wanderers	Etihad Stadium	7:30 PM	7:30 PM
	Saturday 11 October	Central Coast Mariners	Newcastle Jets	Central Coast Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM
	Saturday 11 October	Sydney FC	Melbourne City	Allianz Stadium	7:45 PM	7:45 PM
	Sunday 12 October	Wellington Phoenix	Perth Glory	Westpac Stadium	5:00 PM	3:00 PM
	Sunday 12 October	Brisbane Roar	Adelaide United	Suncorp Stadium	4:00 PM	5:00 PM
ROUND	DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	TIME	
					LOCAL	AEDT
2	Friday 17 October	Adelaide United	Melbourne Victory	Adelaide Oval	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
	Saturday 18 October	Central Coast Mariners	Wellington Phoenix	Central Coast Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM
	Saturday 18 October	Sydney FC	Western Sydney Wanderers	Allianz Stadium	7:45 PM	7:45 PM
	Sunday 19 October	Melbourne City	Newcastle Jets	AAMI Park	3:00 PM	3:00 PM
	Sunday 19 October	Perth Glory	Brisbane Roar	nib Stadium	2:00 PM	5:00 PM
ROUND	DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	TIME	
					LOCAL	AEDT
3	Friday 24 October	Brisbane Roar	Sydney FC	Suncorp Stadium	7:00 PM	8:00 PM
	Saturday 25 October	Western Sydney Wanderers	Central Coast Mariners	Pirtek Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM
	Saturday 25 October	Melbourne Victory	Melbourne City	Etihad Stadium	7:45 PM	7:45 PM
	Sunday 26 October	Wellington Phoenix	Newcastle Jets	Westpac Stadium	5:00 PM	3:00 PM
	Sunday 26 October	Adelaide United	Perth Glory	Coopers Stadium	4:30 PM	5:00 PM
ROUND	DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	TIME	
					LOCAL	AEDT
4	Friday 31 October	Melbourne City	Adelaide United	AAMI Park	7:30 PM	7:30 PM
	Saturday 1 November	Perth Glory	Newcastle Jets	nib Stadium	2:00 PM	5:00 PM
	Saturday 1 November	Western Sydney Wanderers	Brisbane Roar	Pirtek Stadium	7:45 PM	7:45 PM
	Sunday 2 November	Sydney FC	Central Coast Mariners	Allianz Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM
	Monday 3 November	Melbourne Victory	Wellington Phoenix	AAMI Park	7:30 PM	7:30 PM
ROUND	DATE	HOME	AWAY	VENUE	TIME	
					LOCAL	AEDT
5	Friday 7 November	Wellington Phoenix	Western Sydney Wanderers	Westpac Stadium	7:30 PM	5:30 PM
	Friday 7 November	Adelaide United	Sydney FC	Coopers Stadium	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
	Saturday 8 November	Newcastle Jets	Melbourne Victory	Hunter Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM
	Saturday 8 November	Brisbane Roar	Melbourne City	Suncorp Stadium	6:45 PM	7:45 PM
	Sunday 9 November	Central Coast Mariners	Perth Glory	Central Coast Stadium	5:00 PM	5:00 PM



A-LEAGUE 10

ADELAIDE UNITED FC



Marius Zanin

Reds aim for youth



Adelaide United has arguably the best combination of international players in the league, but what most people may not realise is the amount of focus Josep Gombau has stressed on developing young local players.

Adelaide United is not foreign to coaches wanting to develop local players. But the difference now is the club has someone who holds this same passion, but with greater experience in developing young squads for the future. Answering the critics who say you need a local to hold that same passion.

There is no denying Gombau's experience with youth, as shown in his previous role at FC Barcelona. Now Adelaide United and local talent are benefitting from his appointment as Head Coach. There are currently sixteen players who have grown up in South Australia that are involved with the Hyundai A-League squad but this is a small number in Gombau's mind. Along with Michael Marrone, Osama Malik, Awer Mabil, Paul Izzo, Jordan Elsey, Mark Ochieng, Ben Warland, Dylan Smith, John Hall and the recently signed Dylan McGowan, Gombau acknowledges and promotes that there should be much more local talent within the squad. Awer Mabil is affectionately the supporters' favourite young son, and there is no denying who his success can be attributed to this season.

All SA players that are currently involved with the club have come through the Youth Team ranks, besides three who were part of the AIS, Mark Ochieng, Dylan Smith and Benjamin Warland. This signifies Adelaide United's intent to hold onto the State's best talent. Before they were able to join the Hyundai A-League squad, they trained for a while with the Youth Team, where they could learn the fundamentals of the style and philosophy, under the guidance of Youth Team Coaches Michael Valkanis and Angelo Costanzo.

Dylan Smith, who was at the Reds' first ever training session held back in 2003, has been given the opportunity to play for his childhood club. Signing a 2-year contract, the 18-year old's next step is to break into the first team.

After signing for the club, Gombau showed faith in Assistant Coach, Michael Valkanis, acknowledging his understanding of what Adelaide needs. Valkanis, along with the Team of the Decade defender, Angelo Costanzo,

have taken the Youth Team and implemented the same style and philosophy of that of Gombau. This has led to the development of Youth Team players making the next step – A-League football namely, Bruce Kamau, Anthony Costa and Nathan Konstandopoulos have all been a part of the squad.

Train-on player one year and then Hyundai A-League debutant the next, Nathan Konstandopoulos knows what it takes to make the next step.

And the next group of South Australians returned from developing their trade in Spain by participating at the International Cup 2014 (MIC) tournament held in the Catalonia region earlier this year. Adelaide United's participation in this tournament along with previous Youth Team trips to China to play in the prestigious Weifang Cup tournaments, confirms its commitment to providing a strong development program for the best young South Australian players including competitions against the best youth players around the world.

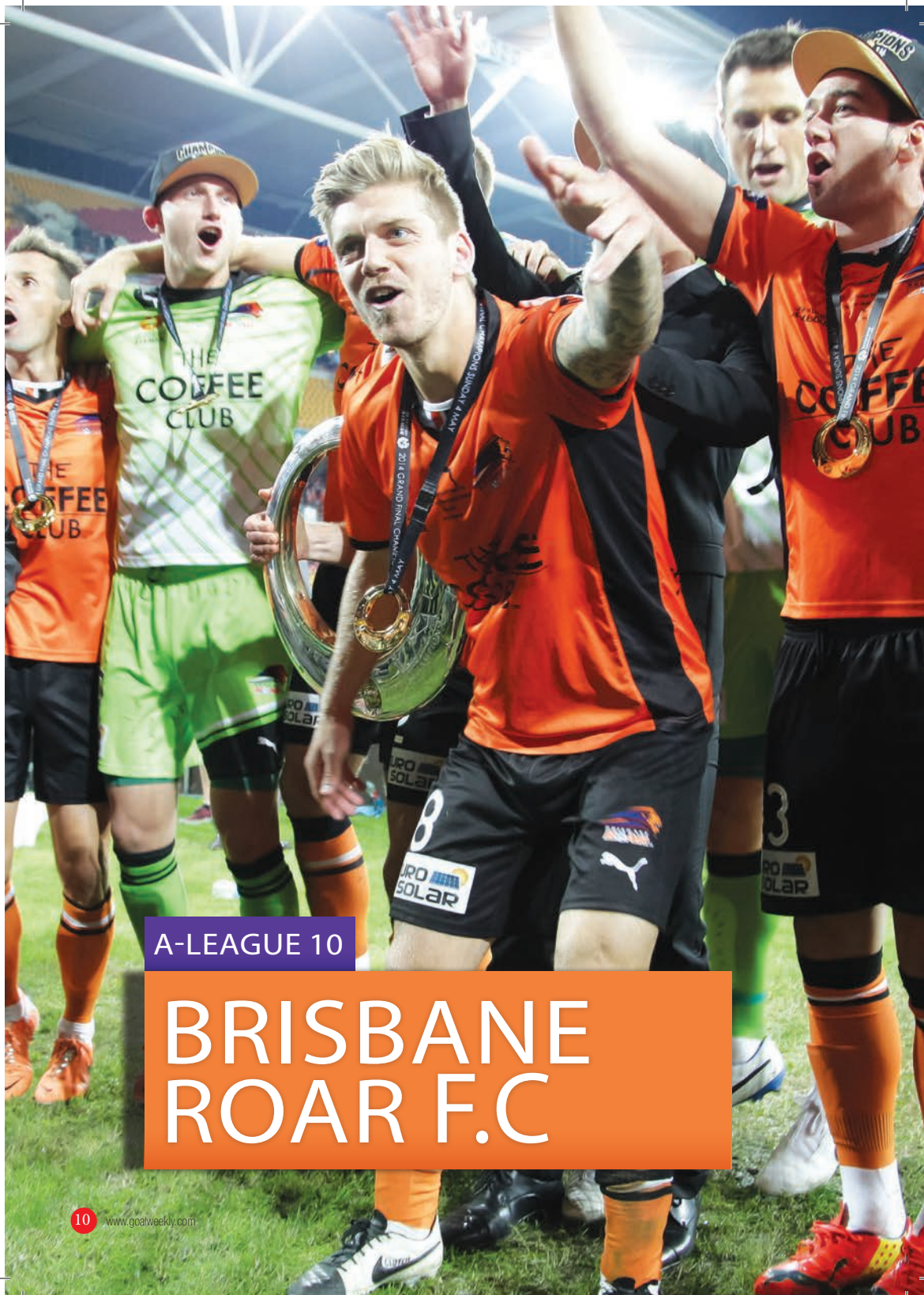
With the new season around the corner, Gombau is working towards the development of the next local talent. The club has already put a youth program in place, which has helped guide and train these younger players over the winter. This program will teach the style and philosophy of Adelaide United, with the opportunity of being selected for the 2014/15 Foxtel National Youth League season.

Passionate. One word for Gombau, the reason he has created so much buzz because his passion does not stop at the A-League squad, it filters through to local coaches, and young players. Gombau with the club's backing is all about promoting the youth of South Australia.

1. Eugene Galekovic (captain)
2. Michael Marrone
3. Nigel Boogaard
4. Dylan McGowan
5. Osama Malik
6. Cássio (vice-captain)
7. Pablo Sánchez
8. Isafas
9. Cirió
10. Marcelo Carrusca
11. Bruce Djite
12. Mark Ochieng
13. Dylan Smith
14. Cameron Watson
15. Ben Warland
16. Craig Goodwin
17. Awer Mabil
18. James Jeggo
20. Paul Izzo
21. Tarek Elrich
22. Fábio Ferreira
23. Jordan Elsey
24. Bruce Kamau
30. John Hall
32. Nathan Konstandopoulos



Lethal marksman Cirió will lead the Reds' attack



A-LEAGUE 10

BRISBANE ROAR F.C

Jarrod Ellis

More Success For Roar?



"Success begets success" is the saying and thus it has been for Brisbane Roar in recent years. A Premiership-Championship double last season followed on from Grand Final wins in 2012 and 2011, results that have left Brisbane standing alone atop the A-League summit after ten years of competition.

It wasn't always like this, Brisbane struggled to make a mark in the A-League's early years and Mike Mulvey will be mindful of the complacency that appeared to grip the playing squad after their last triumph in 2012.

A repeat of that situation, which followed the departure of Ange Postecoglou and ultimately his replacement Rado Vidosic, is an unlikely scenario but there has been some concern at the club over their preparations ahead of the season.

In four outings against A-League opposition in pre-season Brisbane managed only one win and it's most recent match resulted in an FFA Cup exit at the hands of Adelaide United.

The nature of that defeat led to two player meetings being held where the club's ordinary pre-season form was addressed in a frank manner. Whether or not those meetings will bear fruit remains unclear.

What's already clear is that Michael Theo is set to miss up to six weeks of football with a broken wrist. The injury was suffered last week and barring any unforeseen signings will mean that Jamie Young will start between the posts for Brisbane.

Theo's absence is a blow but only a temporary one. The notable permanent absentee from Brisbane's playing squad is of course, Besart Berisha. The firebrand striker established himself as the league's top goal scorer since his arrival three years ago and his departure leaves a gaping hole upfront for the Roar.

Mike Mulvey and his staff have attempted to address that need with the signing of Mensur Kurtishi. The Albanian striker arrives with an impressive goal scoring record, having averaged better than one in two at each of his previous clubs and at only twenty-eight years of age should still be at his peak.

Kurtishi will be expected to carry the goal scoring load but Brisbane won't be short of options up front. Jean Carlos Solorzano has become somewhat of a forgotten man but could still prove to be an excellent impact substitute. Henrique provides another option to lead the Brisbane attack and has a history of chipping in with crucial goals.

Out wide Brisbane is well stocked. Should

Dimitri Petratos continue his improvement the Roar could soon lay claim to having the A-League's premier right winger in the squad. On the left Thomas Broich is a year older but, coming off a season where he finished as the Johnny Warren Medal winner, should still be among the league's best.

Brisbane's midfield is largely unchanged but received a timely boost with the arrival of Adam Sarota on loan. He'll join last season's preferred starting trio of Matt McKay, Luke Brattan and Liam Miller with high hopes of forcing his way into the first eleven.

In defence things are far less rosy for the Roar. Socceroo Ivan Franjic departed at season's end for Torpedo Moscow, leaving Brisbane bereft of its most mobile defender. Smith, North and Stefanutto bring a wealth of experience to the backline but not one of that trio is likely to win a footrace against an opposition striker. Stefanutto's diminishing pace is of particular concern. The veteran left-back's overlapping runs are a key component of Brisbane's game plan but even last season he was being identified as a weak link by opposition sides.

Corey Brown and James Donachie are both young defenders with A-League experience and should be aiming to force their way into Mulvey's plans.

Jack Hingert is the obvious replacement for Franjic at right back but he suffered an inconsistent 2013-14 and it remains to be seen if he has the full trust of Mulvey.

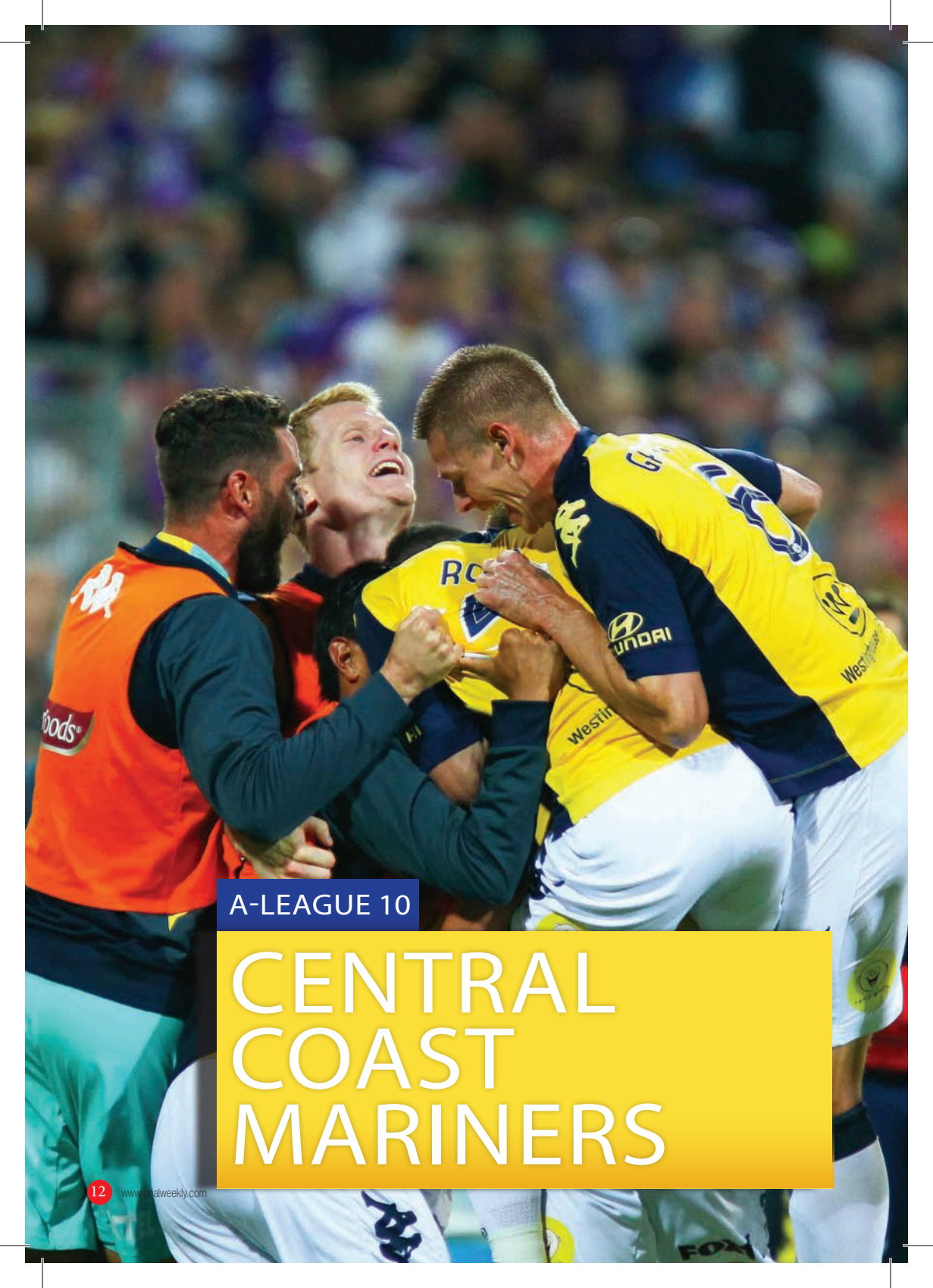
Brisbane have been at the A-League summit for the previous four seasons and the club still has enough talent in the squad to compete with the league's best. That being said the competition has improved year on year and with a retooled Western Sydney, a Graham Arnold led Sydney FC and Josep Gombau's Adelaide United all looking likely contenders for Brisbane's crown, the A-League's most successful club faces a stern test in the season ahead.



Roar's Mike Mulvey aims to defend the title

1. Michael Theo (Gk)
2. Matt Smith (C)
3. Shane Stefanutto
4. Adam Sarota
5. Corey Brown
6. George Lambadaridis
7. Mensur Kurtishi
8. Steven Lustica
10. Henrique
11. Liam Miller
12. Jean Carlos Solorzano
13. Jade North
14. Daniel Bowles
15. James Donachie
16. Devante Clut
17. Matt McKay
18. Luke Brattan
19. Jack Hingert
20. Kofi Danning
21. Jamie Young (Gk)
22. Thomas Broich
23. Dimitri Petratos
27. Ben Litfin (Youth)
28. Brandon Borrello (Youth)
29. Patrick Theodore (Youth)

Ins: Daniel Bowles (Adelaide United), Jamie Young (Hayes & Yeading United), Mensur Kurtishi (Fk Shkendija), Adam Sarota (Loan - Fc Utrecht), Devante Clut (Promoted From Youth Team)



A-LEAGUE 10

CENTRAL COAST MARINERS

Mariners set to shine



Year after year the strength and determination of the Central Coast Mariners is tested, and year after year they pass with flying colours. Last season proved to be a year of transition, and yet somehow they battled on and finished 3rd in the A-league.

The departure of Graham Arnold left big shoes to fill, and the reins were passed onto his successor Phil Moss, who was handpicked from state league obscurity 3 years earlier by Arnold himself. Not only were the Mariners deprived of their title winning coach, their star attacker Michael McGlinchey soon followed Arnold to Japan. Moss might have struggled at first, but he was eventually able to settle into his new role and slowly return the Mariners to winning ways, albeit in a pragmatic fashion.

The grace period for Moss is well and truly over. He has had his first full pre-season in top flight football, lost only one key player in Ibini and has begun to mould the Mariners into his very own team.

The McGlinchey Saga may have dominated the majority of the headlines, however having left mid-season Moss has already demonstrated that there is life after the Kiwi maestro. The real loss will be young Bernie Ibini who, after several years of hot and cold form, returned on loan to produce the most prolific period of his career, helping to save the Mariner's season in the process.

Malick Mane arrives from Sweden, as the obvious like for like replacement. The Senegalese International is also a powerful and explosive player capable of playing either upfront or on the wing. Whilst he may not be as prolific as Ibini, he does seem to possess more creativity in the final third. The Mariners have also added a wildcard in the form of Hungarian youth international midfielder Richárd Vernes.

Due to player transfers and injuries, the Mariners were forced into five January transfer window signings. The two big name signings in particular, Bosnar and Kim, both seemed to struggle for form and fitness at one time or another, and will surely benefit from a full preseason.

The one to watch this season is Anthony Caceres,. Last year was his breakout season, as he began to compete with John Hutchinson and Nick Montgomery for a starting berth in the centre of midfield. He was able to provide guile and creativity, as well as the occasional flash of brilliance.

Caceres has the lot; technique, silky footwork, and the ability to score from distance. Apart from consistency, the key improvement he needs to make this season is to improve his all-round defensive play, an area that Hutchinson and Montgomery excel at. If he can manage to build on his impressive start to his career, he could soon join the growing list of Mariners Alumni plying their trade overseas.

If the Mariners are to continue punching above their weight, they will need the next generation of youngsters to step up once again. Mitchell Duke looks all set to lead the line as the Mariner's main goal threat, after struggling out of position on the wing last year. Whilst this season is the perfect chance for Fitzgerald and Anderson to take their game to the next level after each of them enjoyed a solid but at times inconsistent season last year. Storm Roux enjoyed a great debut season, and should look to continue where he left off.

Meanwhile the senior playing group including the likes of Hutchinson, Montgomery, Bosnar and Rose will continue to play an important role in guiding the Mariners forward.

Last season we saw Moss tinker with the Mariner's preferred 4-2-3-1 formation, by inverting the midfield triangle resulting in a deep lying midfielder playing as a pivot behind the two central midfielders. Moss has revisited this formation during the preseason, which has provided him with an alternative that could prove useful in certain situations in the months to come.

If Moss can strike that perfect balance that the Mariners have shown in the past, they could find themselves at the pointy end of the season once more. The key will be whether Moss can continue to nurture the young talent that the Mariners have become famous for.

1. Matthew Nash
2. Storm Roux
3. Joshua Rose
5. Zac Anderson
6. Brent Griffiths
7. John Hutchinson (C)
8. Nick Montgomery
9. Mitchell Duke
10. Anthony Caceres
11. Nick Fitzgerald
12. Liam Reddy
14. Malick Mané
15. Matthew Sim
16. Liam Rose
17. Richárd Vernes
18. Glen Trifiro
19. Matt Simon
20. Anthony Kalik
21. Michael Neill
22. Tom Slater
23. Isaka Cernak
24. Hayden Morton
25. Eddy Bosnar
26. Kim Seung-yong

Ins - Liam Rose (AIS), Anthony Kalik (AIS), Malick Mane (on loan from IFK Göteborg, Sweden), Matt Nash (Bonnyrigg White Eagles, NSW), Richárd Vernes (on loan from Budapest Honvéd, Hungary)

Outs - Justin Pasfield (Tampines Rovers, Singapore), Mile Sterjovski (Retired), Marcos Flores (Newcastle Jets), Adam Kwasnik (Retired), Bernie Ibini (Sydney FC), Marcel Seip (FC Emmen, The Netherlands)



Mariners boss Phil Moss



A-LEAGUE 10

MELBOURNE CITY FC

New-look City slickers

There was a time that Melbourne Heart's suffering supporters witnessed a 19-match winless streak. Gloom filled AAMI Park and few saw a realistic route out of trouble. Following the sacking of John Aloisi, John Van't Schip was given the top job, and the wheels were put in motion for a complete facelift the likes of which Australia had not seen.

A change in management helped restore much of the shattered optimism, while the \$11.25m purchase of the club by the City Football Group meant that 2014 would forever be a landmark year for the fledgling franchise.

Melbourne City are now the most talked about club in the country. This, following a season where the club saw 42 goals conceded while it accumulated a mere 26 points from 27 fixtures, and quite frankly, looked dead in the water.

The spending power of the mega-rich consortium has attracted Spanish sensation David Villa, former Chelsea FC winger Damien Duff and Slovenian International Robert Koren for the 2014/15 season, enough for most bookmakers to give City the 'favourites' tag.

It is not yet confirmed when Villa's loan deal will end, but Van't Schip is confident the World Cup winner's presence can help his side build a platform to better the results of last season. "We are confident David will be an incredible asset to the playing group and his experiences in Europe and for his country will help our players not only on the pitch, but in training as well," Van't Schip said.

"The whole club is excited that David has arrived, we are here to help him, he is here to help us."

This is a club raring to step out of the shadows and into the new era. The acquisition of prime Australian talent, Aaron Mooy and Erik Paartalu promises to cover the loss of International marquee midfielder Orlando Engelaar, who excelled in what was a poor 2013/14 campaign.

Following defender Patrick Gerhardt's departure, Connor Chapman was signed from Newcastle Jets. Due to his mobility, he is able to play in central defence or as a full-back, and looks set to play more than a bit-part role after impressing in the 2013/14 season that he was called up to the A-League All Stars squad to face Manchester United.

Van't Schip also opted to sign former Melbourne Victory youth product and 2014 NPL1 rising star, Nicholas Symeoy after

a successful trial. Primarily utilised as an advanced midfielder at Moreland Zebras, the youngster is also adept in a defensive role. Despite an array of new arrivals, a core group still remain: Massimo Murdocca, David Williams, Mate Dugandzic, Patrick Kisnorbo (who has been named as captain for the upcoming season), Rob Wietlaert, Nick Kalmar, Ross Archibald, Ben Garruccio, Jason Hoffman, Iain Ramsay, Andrew Redmayne, Stefan Mauk and Jonatan Germano. Many of which have been present since the early inceptions Melbourne Heart in the A-League, and will be looking to be apart of the future, whatever it may hold.

A date with Sydney will effectively get the campaign up and running, but the Melbourne derby in round 3 holds the potential to set the tone for City's new beginning.

Villa arrived in Melbourne on Monday, giving him little time to gel with his team-mates, but one speculates a player of his quality won't need months to integrate himself adequately.

The 32-year-old is set to feature in a forward three with David Williams and Mate Dugandzic. Consistency has been the issue for the City strikers, although Villa looks likely to occupy one or more defenders to allow the Australian pair increased freedom.

Acquisitions of promising youth talent, established Soccerroos, and proven European performers make the 2014/15 season the most promising to date. Steady ownership & management, arguably the strongest squad in the A-League and a membership total of 8,277, well clear of the 7,307 who signed up in season 2013/14 and the season is yet to begin. These are exciting times.



1. Andrew REDMAYNE
3. Robbie WIELAERT
4. Connor CHAPMAN
5. Erik PAARTALU
6. Aaron MOOY
7. Iain RAMSAY
8. Massimo MURDOCCA
9. David VILLA
10. Robert KOREN
11. Damien DUFF
13. Jonatan GERMANO
14. James BROWN
15. David WILLIAMS
17. Jason HOFFMAN
18. Paulo RETRE
19. Benjamin GARUCCIO
20. Tando VELAPHI
21. Stefan MAUK
22. Nick KALMAR
23. Mate DUGANDZIC
24. Patrick KISNORBO
25. Jacob MELLING
26. Marc MARINO

Coach:
John VAN'T SCHIP



Former Irish international Damien Duff comes to Aussie shores



A-LEAGUE 10

MELBOURNE VICTORY

Nick Amies

Victory on the hunt



Last season for Melbourne Victory it was meant to be a continuation of Ange Postecoglou's rebuilding of the squad, but the former Roar coach couldn't ignore the call of the national team and Kevin Muscat stepped in to fill the void.

Despite being a rookie, the former Victory captain showed remarkable ability in continuing his mentor's philosophy and the Victory were one of the most exciting attacking units in the league. However, the side's 4-3 win over Adelaide in Round 20 encapsulated their season - remarkable going forward, somewhat hopeless at the back.

When running an eye over the club's transfer activity it is obvious that defensive stability has been a priority. The loss of Adama Traore is massive, but the arrivals of Daniel Georgievski and Matthieu Delpierre compensate for the Ivorian's departure and the retirement of eternal liability Pablo Contreras. Carl Valeri also arrives from Italy to add stability to a midfield that looked fragile whenever Mark Milligan was out of action.

Going forward James Troisi's return to Italy left a gaping hole in the frontline, but the Victory moved swiftly to secure the controversial Besart Berisha from Brisbane Roar. The Albanian may have a bit of a mean streak, but when he is in form there are very few capable of stopping him finding the net.

The good news for Victory fans is that classy Melbourne Victory midfielder Gui Finkler will remain at the club until at least the end of the 2015/16 Hyundai A-League season, after agreeing to terms on a new two-year deal. Finkler played in every A-League match last season, scoring an impressive nine goals in his 29 appearances.

The 28-year-old said he was delighted to be extending his time in Melbourne.

"I love everything about Melbourne and I'm thrilled that I'll be here for at least another two years," Finkler said.

"This season will be a very exciting one for us as a club and I am really happy to remain a part of Kevin (Muscat)'s squad. I know we're all desperate to go one step further and make the Grand Final in 2014/15, so I can't wait to help the club be even better.

"Melbourne Victory is a great club to play for - the fans, the facilities, the coaches, the staff - everything about it is fantastic for a player."

Coach Kevin Muscat said the Brazilian was

an important piece of the puzzle and he was excited to have him in Victory colours for the next two seasons.

"Gui is a talented individual and a big part of our set-up, so it's fantastic we will be able to call on his services for another two years," Muscat said

"We also know how big of a presence he is in our changeroom and he certainly provides plenty of advice and insight to the other boys, especially the younger ones, in the squad.

"Gui is extremely popular with our fans as well, so I know I speak on behalf of all of them when I say how pleased we are he will remain with us at Melbourne Victory."

Tunisian international Fahid Ben Khalfallah is the final addition to the squad and surely Muscat will be hoping he can dovetail with Berisha in a similar way to Thomas Broich did in Brisbane. The 31-year-old comes in from Troyes in France's second tier and will wear the number 14 shirt that James Troisi sported last season.

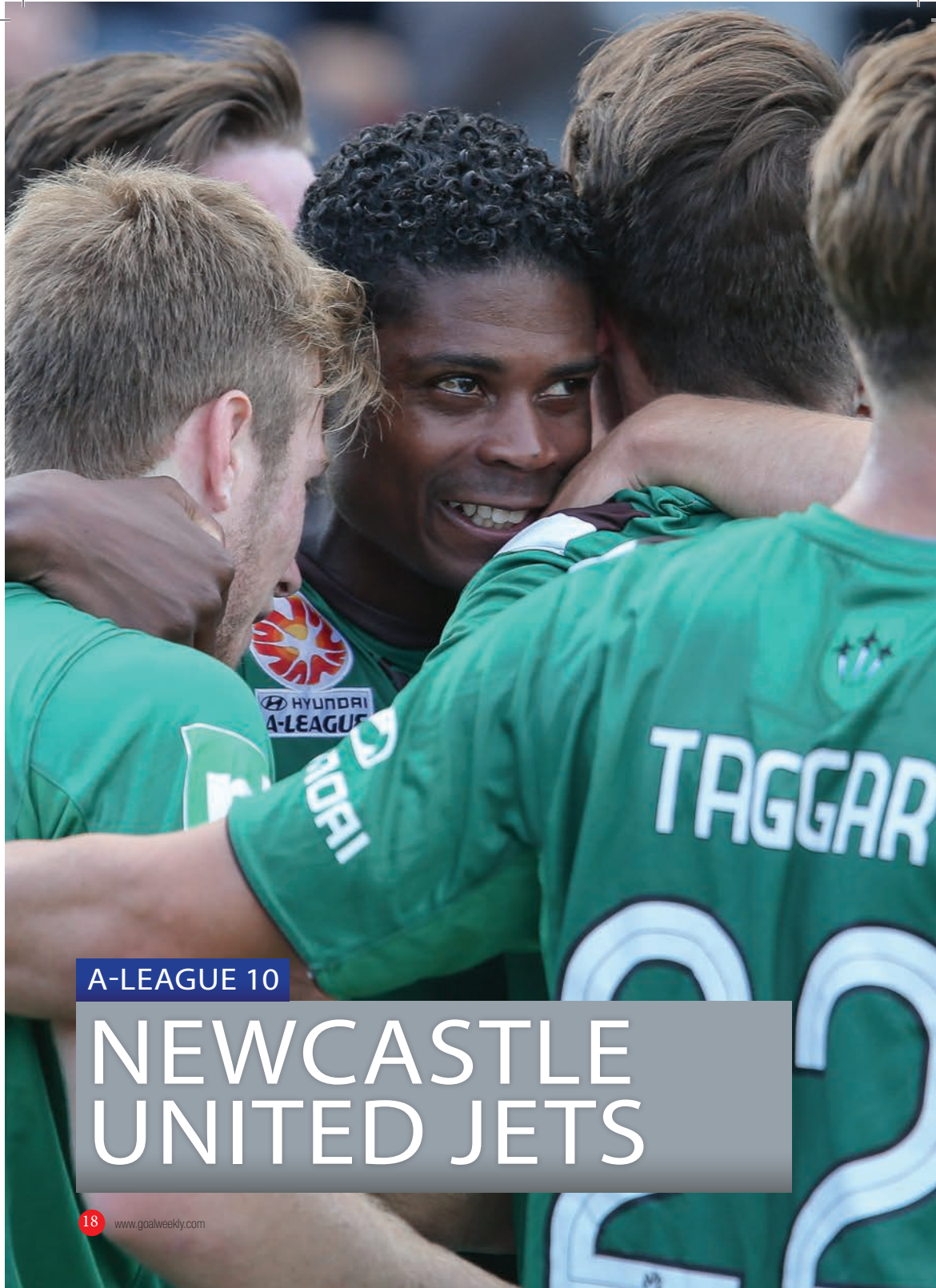
There is no doubt that the Victory are one of the best supported sides in the competition, but now their supremacy in Melbourne is under threat thanks to the rebranding of the Heart into Melbourne City. The derby matches will be even fiercer this season as the two clubs vie for dominance, meeting for the first time in Round Three at the Etihad.

All in all, the Victory once again look strong enough to mount a finals charge. The squad is brimming with young talent and possesses a core of proven A-League performers. However if they can get Besart Berisha focused on his football a return to the top is on the cards for Muscat and his men.

1. Nathan Coe
2. Jason Geria
4. Nick Ansell
5. Mark Milligan (captain)
6. Leigh Broxham (vice-captain)
7. Gui Finkler
8. Besart Berisha
9. Kosta Barbarouses
10. Archie Thompson
11. Connor Pain
13. Andrew Nabbout
14. Fahid Ben Khalfallah
15. Daniel Georgievski
16. Rashid Mahazi
17. Matthieu Delpierre
18. Dylan Murnane
20. Lawrence Thomas
21. Carl Valeri
22. Jesse Makarounas
23. Adrian Leijer (2nd vice-captain)
24. Scott Galloway
26. Jordan Brown



With a settled squad and a solid pre-season Victory gaffer Kevin Muscat will hope his troops are amongst the title front runners



A-LEAGUE 10

NEWCASTLE UNITED JETS

Shaun Dyas

Jets at the Crossroads

Whatever they do, it will be guaranteed viewing this season.

The Newcastle Jets have flattered to deceive for the last few A-League seasons, playing at times some gorgous football.

This is mixed in with their ability to constantly shoot themselves in the foot with poor pieces of defending and loose passing coming out from the back.

New Jets coach, former Adelaide assistant Phil Stubbins has stepped in to try and solve these problems and fix up what he has called an 'imbalanced squad'.

Out goes holding midfielder and last year's skipper Ruben Zadkovich (Perth Glory), along with young stars Josh Brillante (ACF Fiorentina) and Adam Taggart (Fulham FC).

The new talent that has arrived at the club includes former Adelaide United, Melbourne Victory and Mariners man Marcos Flores along with Jeronimo Neumann, also formerly of Adelaide.

Along with Ecuadorian striker Edson Montano, it will be down to these three men to determine just how far this Jets squad can go.

They will be assisted in forward areas by the now veteran Joel Griffiths, who despite his 35 years is still revered in these parts and still dangerous to opposition defences.

He has played as both a wide man in a 4-2-3-1 in pre-season and alongside Montano in a 4-4-2 and it will be interesting to see just what Stubbins has in store for his new look strike force.

In the middle of the park things are not looking as clear for the Novocastrians, so much so that an SOS was sent out to Zenon Caravella to help provide cover at the start of the season.

Both Billy Celeski (Groin) and Ben Kantarovski (Knee) are out for the short to medium term, perhaps longer, with little cover currently in the squad after the departures of Brillante and Zadkovich. Jacob Pepper and Taylor Regan are expected to start the first game this weekend, but they are at best a makeshift pairing and lack the quality and creativity to remain in these positions long term.

At the back the squad does look fairly

strong. Dutchman Kew Jaliens returns as captain to lead the defence and will partner one of the two new signings, Sam Gallagher or Adrian Madaschi in the heart of defence.

David Carney has been Newcastle's form player in the pre-season and has a mortgage on the left-back spot and will be likely joined on the right side by the returning Scott Neville.

He was one of the Jets best early last season before a serious knee injury scuppered his season. If he can return to anything like that form then he could easily develop into one of the league's better right backs.

Mark Birighitti appears to have the jump on Ben Kennedy in goal and will be hopeful of recapturing the form that had him on the verge of a move to Bayer Leverkusen before their change of manager last season. He is also desperate to try and crack the Socceroos squad so a good start to the season can only help his cause.

The issue for the Jets will be the draw at the start of the season. Due to the relaying of the surface at Hunter Stadium, they will be on the road for the first few weeks of the season.

The question will be whether the Jets will have left themselves too much to do early in the season to make a serious play for the finals.

It is my feeling that they will have and it could be another frustrating season for the proud fans of Newcastle to endure.

Predicted finish: 8th

Key Player: Marcos Flores

One to watch: Allan Welsh



1. Mark BIRIGHITTI (gk)
2. Scott NEVILLE
3. Taylor REGAN
4. Kew JALIENS (c)
5. Ben KANTAROVSKI
6. Adrian MADASCHI
7. Jeronimo NEUMANN
8. Zenon CARAVELLA
9. Joel GRIFFITHS
10. Marcos FLORES
11. Andrew HOOLE
12. Sam GALLAGHER
13. Edson MONTANO
14. Billy CELESKI
15. Josh BARRESI
16. Jacob PEPPER
17. James VIRGILI
18. Allan WELSH
19. Mitch COOPER
20. Ben KENNEDY (gk)
21. Sam GALLAWAY
22. Jonny STEELE
23. David CARNEY
25. Brandon LUNDY
30. John SOLARI (gk)

INS:

Adrian Madaschi, Jeronimo Neumann, Marcos Flores, Sam Gallagher, Edson Motano, Billy Celeski, Josh Barresi, Jonny Steele, Brandon Lundy

OUTS:

Ruben Zadkovich, Emile Heskey, Craig Goodwin, Connor Chapman, Joey Gibbs, Josh Brillante, Josh Mitchell, James Brown, Michael Bridges, Adam Taggart, Mitch Oxborrow



Phil Stubbins returns to the A-League after a successful stint in Asia

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On behalf of Professional Footballers Australia (PFA) I would like to wish you all the very best for the coming season. The 2014/15 A-League season is shaping up as the best yet in the competitions ten year history.

The growing attractiveness of the

A-League has been highlighted once again with a host of international stars headlined by David Villa, Matthieu Delpierre, Damien Duff and Robert Koren. The emergence of a host young stars who are certain to light up the competition is equally encouraging and once again illustrates the progress the league has made.

Off the pitch Membership, TV ratings and the growing financial strength of many of the A-League clubs is encouraging. For the players this is hugely satisfying as it highlights the effectiveness of the current A-League Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in delivering improvements for all of the games key stakeholders.

Whilst this is hugely encouraging there remains much work to be done if the sport is to achieve its full potential. With the games three key CBAs – A-League, Socceroos and Matildas all set to expire mid 2015 this represents an ideal opportunity to build a 'whole of game' agreement.

Both the PFA and Football Federation Australia (FFA) have committed themselves to ensuring that this moment is seized. The players as always remain committed to working towards an agreement that not only safeguards the economic viability of clubs but also one that delivers an enhanced career path for players in terms of remuneration, opportunity, player education, development, wellbeing and retirement programs.

If we achieve this aim football has the potential to become the game of choice for all talented athletes across Australia and the code will reap the benefits. This is not a challenge for FFA, the clubs, the players and the PFA alone. You the fans have, and always will be, the games key stakeholder. Your support, insights and knowledge must be utilised fully if the sport is to prosper.

Your importance is never lost of the players. Our members have long recognised that the wellbeing of the game is a precondition to the wellbeing of the players. Without your support the game's wellbeing cannot possibly be safeguarded.

Once again best wishes for the coming season and may we all seize this moment to ensure football fulfills its enormous potential in this country.

Adam Vivian | PFA Chief Executive



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A-LEAGUE 10

PERTH GLORY



Peter Simcox

Best of the West

Perth Glory heads into season 10 of the Hyundai A-League with a great deal of optimism, both on and off the field. The internal issues that plagued the club last season has been overcome and with Kenny Lowe in charge from the off this season, he has brought in some quality players, and their long suffering supporters are looking for an improvement from last season's eighth place finish.

After the euphoria of signing former French international defender William Gallas last season, which didn't work out, the club have gone for a group of players with A-League experience, along with the wily Irish striker Andy Keogh from Millwall in the English Championship.

Keogh, along with Youssef Hersi, Mitch Nichols, Richard Garcia, Ruben Zadkovich, Diogo Ferreira and Dino Djulbic have bolstered the squad, and the time they take to gel in the side will go a long way to the Glory sitting at the right end of the table this campaign, and not playing catch up as they have done in previous seasons.

There are still concerns up front, after strikers Shane Smeltz left to join Sydney FC, and Serkan Darvydas, who has re-joined Turkish Super Lig side Gaziantepspor. Last season they were lowest scorers in the league, and Lowe has tried Chris Harold and Jamie Maclaren in the role in pre-season, but has mentioned he has a spot available to bring in another striker. Although they head into the campaign a little light in the front third, Lowe believes goals will come from other areas this season, with Nichols, Garcia, Hersi and Sidnei Sciola all chipping in from down the flanks.

In the middle of the park there was a huge hole left, after the retirement of club Captain Jacob Burns and Steve McGarry. But they have brought wisely with former Newcastle Jets skipper Ruben Zadkovich coming in to add bite, while there may be more game time for Serbian Nebojsa Marinkovic, who has impressed in the pre-season, along with Rostyn Griffiths.

At the back the return from injury of Scott Jamieson and Josh Risdon is a huge boost, although the performances of youngsters Matt Davies and Riley Woodcock last term bodes well for the club in the future. At the heart of the back four, Michael Thwaite was a stand out last season and his partnership with Djulbic, who has returned to the club after

spells in China and the UAE, or Jack Clisby will be vital, while behind them is Danny Vukovic, who has returned from his loan spell at Japanese side Vegalta Sendai.

The depth of the 2015 squad is deeper and that is something they lacked last season. But are they strong enough to challenge for the title that is the big question. Club owner Tony Sage has put his faith in former Birmingham City midfielder Kenny Lowe, but there are still concerns from certain quarters he isn't the man for the job. He brought a new belief to the club last season, after the departure of Alistair Edwards and he won the support of the player group, if not some of the Glory supporters, but he will be hoping for a good start if the vultures are not to circle.

The Glory opens their season with the biggest road trip for a league game in the world, when they travel 5,260 kilometres to take on Wellington Phoenix at the Westpac Stadium. That is followed by the visit of Hyundai A-League champions Brisbane Roar at nib Stadium, before they host Melbourne Victory in the quarter-finals of the FFA Cup on October 29.

The Shed will again be in full voice as the club goes in search of their first A-League title. The supporters had a sniff of it in 2012, before going down to the Roar in the Grand Final at Suncorp Stadium. Lowe has had the backing of the clubs hierarchy, and the ball is defiantly now in his court. The 52-year-old has been successful in the junior ranks in WA football, heading the NTC programme in the state, he will now look to turn the Glory's fortunes around, and with the squad he has at his disposal, a spot in the finals is a must - let the games begin!!!!



1. Danny Vuković
2. Jack Clisby
3. Brandon O'Neill
5. Rostyn Griffiths
6. Dino Đulbić
7. Youssef Hersi
8. Ruben Zadkovich
9. Andy Keogh
10. Nebojsa Marinković
11. Richard Garcia
13. Diogo Ferreira
14. Chris Harold
15. Jamie Maclaren
16. Sidnei
17. Mitch Nichols (on loan from Cerezo Osaka)
18. Jack Duncan
19. Joshua Risdon
20. Daniel De Silva (on loan from Roma)
21. Scott Jamieson
22. Cameron Edwards
23. Michael Thwaite (Captain)
24. Matthew Davies
25. Riley Woodcock
26. Harry O'Brien
30. Jordan Thurtell

In: Youssef Hersi (Western Sydney Wanderers), Dino Djulbic (Al-Wahda S.C.C.), Ruben Zadkovich (Newcastle Jets), Andy Keogh (Millwall), Danny Vukovic (returning from loan spell at Vegalta Sendai), Diogo Ferreira (Brisbane Roar), Mitch Nichols (on loan from Cerezo Osaka), Jordan Thurtell, Richard Garcia (Minnesota)





CHIANESE

16

SYDNEY.COM

A-LEAGUE 10

SYDNEY FC

Champs in our midst?



In the short history of the A-league it seems Sydney FC still don't know which label to make their own. For every game that thrills a sold out Allianz crowd with slick movement and compact formations there is a game, played in front of a handful of supporters, where the Sky Blues look like they forgot their was even a fixture to be played. This, the 10th season of the Hyundai A-league, is another opportunity for Sydney FC to finally stamp themselves on the domestic football landscape as a true powerhouse. At the same time though there is the possibility that they will once again fall short of their fans lofty expectations and that is where Sydney will begin this season, as an enigma to everyone. Everyone that is, except themselves.

This version of the Sky Blues is not one that has been seen before. Although they have recruited an established Marquee of international pedigree in Marc Janko, the current captain of the Austrian National team, he is not a player who has past his prime. With the greatest respect to previous Marquee signings from Dwight Yorke, to Benito carbone and most famously Alessandro Del Piero, they were all at the very end of their illustrious careers. In contrast, Janko boasts a prolific goals to games ratio, most notably at FC Red Bull Salzburg where he scored 75 league goals in 108 games and at just 31 years of age has years left at the highest level. Around him, newly appointed Head Coach Graham Arnold, a previous A-league winner with the Central Coast Mariners, has brought in a plethora of talent, both new and old, to finally back up the hype that Sydney FC generates every season. Shane Smeltz, one of the A-league's all time highest goal scorers and two time Golden Boot winner, along side the irrepressible Bernie Ibini and the return of Sydney club legend Alex Brosque make for an attacking line-up that will be the envy of all other clubs. Pre-season revelations (a pre-season in which Sydney won 9 of their 12 matches) like Christopher Naumoff will line up alongside creative outlets such as Nicke Carle and Terry Antonis while the back line remains built around the former Soccerero Sasa Oggenovski.

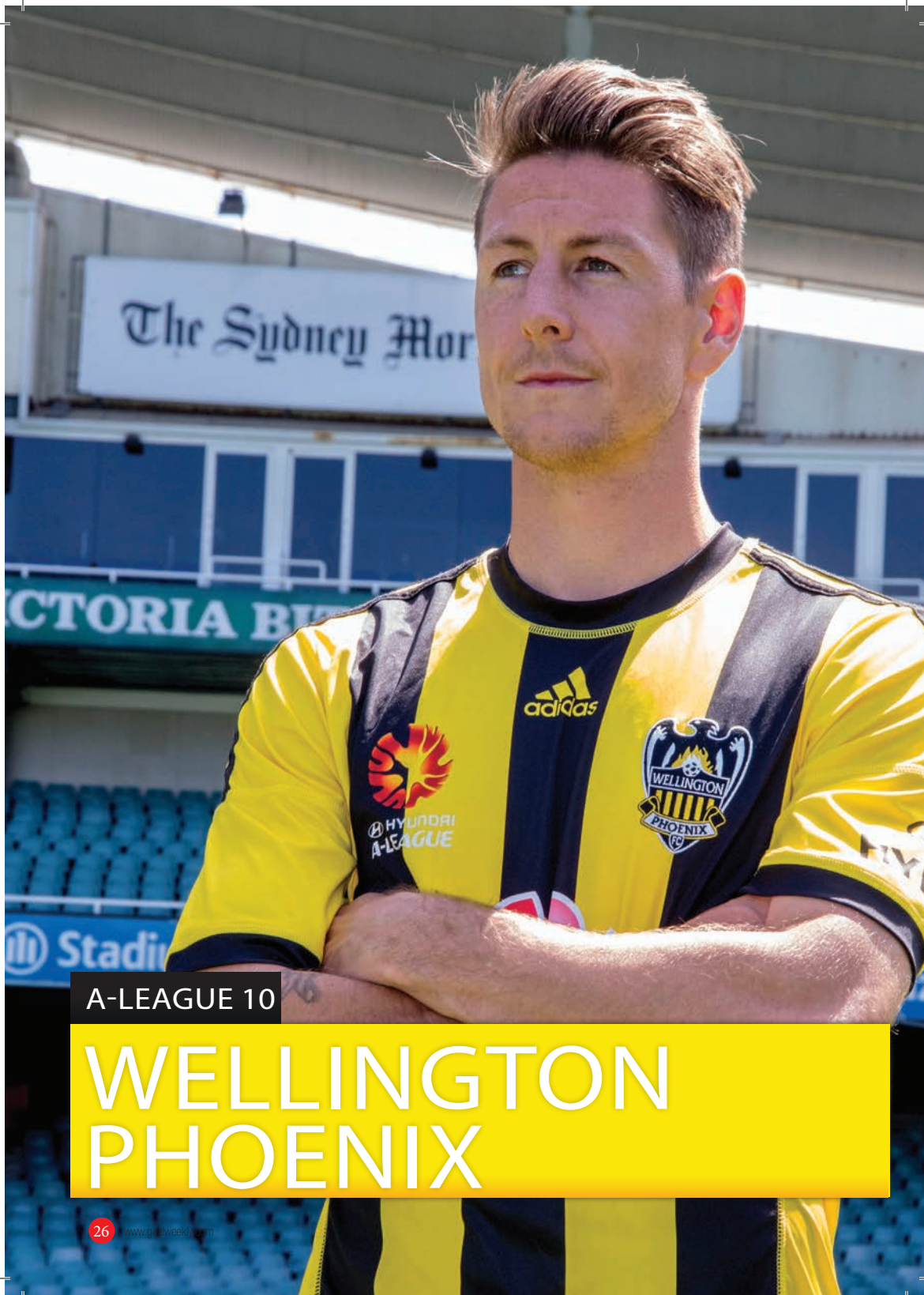
Change can so often disrupt a football club, stability has been the cornerstone of success for so many club models around the world but for the Sky Blues this season, the 2014/15 Hyundai A-league, is a whole different story. Sydney FC have had a long and successful pre-season as the players have become accustomed to Graham Arnold's methods and an optimism has infiltrated the club from the boardroom down to the Cove. For too long it has seemed like Sydney has worried more about getting turnstiles ticking with big name signings that put their brand on the back page of the paper, and admirable as it was this did not always correlate to success on the pitch. With Graham Arnold at the helm the focus will be on good football. Disciplined football. Football that not only demands results but achieves them, and if there is any city in the nation that loves a winner it is Sydney. Leave the back page of the paper to Melbourne City, let the Wanderers lay claim to the loudest fans, because this year is all about the resurgence of Sydney FC and once the Hyundai A-league kicks off again the fans will come, not for the names on the back of the shirts but for the football being played on the pitch.

10 years on from their first A-league triumph and there is everything to play for, for Sydney FC this will be a season to remember one way or another, champions or chumps? Time will tell.

1. Ivan Necevski
2. Sebastian Ryall
3. Saša Oggenovski (vice captain)
4. Pedj Bojić
5. Matthew Jurman
6. Nikola Petković (vice captain)
7. Corey Gameiro
8. Miloš Dimitrijević
9. Shane Smeltz
11. Bernie Ibini-Isei (on loan from Shanghai Dongya)
12. Hagi Gligor
13. Alex Gersbach
14. Alex Brosque (captain)
16. Chris Naumoff
17. Terry Antonis
18. Peter Triantis
19. Nick Carle
20. Vedran Janjetović
21. Marc Janko
22. Ali Abbas
23. Rhyann Grant
30. Anthony Bouzanis



Graham Arnold takes charge of SFC



A-LEAGUE 10

WELLINGTON PHOENIX

CHANGING TIMES



What a difference a year makes!

When Ernie Merrick took the reins at the Wellington Phoenix in June last year he turned up to training to find he had only eight players to work with because of varying circumstances.

Everything was a rush as signings were needed to replace players who had been released, and Merrick must have wondered what he had let himself in for.

This time around on June 2 he had the bulk of the squad on the grass, some top-class signings on the horizon, a well-planned pre-season in place and Phoenix Academy players available to ensure training numbers stayed up.

A massive bonus was the visit of English Premier League clubs West Ham United and Newcastle United that had New Zealand soccer fans buzzing.

Merrick had a wish list of players he was keen to sign and he admits that the arrival of Alex Rodriguez from Sunderland, Roly Bonevacia from Holland, Nathan Burns from Korea and, eventually, Michael McGlinchey after a loan spell in Japan, exceeded his expectations. "We also signed Tom Doyle, who had come through the Academy, so I am delighted with the quality of player we have managed to attract," the coach said.

"Another big plus for the coming season is that we will have a reserve team playing in the ASB national championship which means players not in the first team and those coming back from injury have somewhere to play." Merrick was pleased with the pre-season programme his team completed, winning nine of the 14 games played, losing three and drawing two.

"Beating West Ham was the highlight but we played just as well, if not better, against Newcastle United despite losing 1-0," he said. With the squad he has put together Merrick is confident of making the finals after the disappointment of missing out last season despite playing some of the best football in the club's history.

"We have made quality signings and the return of Albert Riera, who was outstanding before picking up his injury, is like having another new signing," Merrick said.

With New Zealand international Glen Moss in goal and a settled international backline of Manny Muscat (Malta), Ben Sigmund, Andrew Durante and Tom Doyle (all New

Zealand) in front of him, opposing teams will find goals harder to come by than last season. The midfield has strength in depth as well as an abundance of skill and Merrick will be hoping that will be the springboard to success.

Riera will provide cover in front of the defence with Bonevacia, who had almost 10 years in the famed Ajax Academy, Rodriguez and McGlinchey given licence to get forward in support of Burns and Jeremy Brockie.

Perhaps one of the most important facets will be the overall strength of the squad given the unfortunate number of injuries sustained last season.

While Merrick was at last season forced to throw inexperienced youngsters in when injuries struck, this time around he has Vince Lia, who was outstanding last season but has been hampered by injury in pre-season, Louis Fenton, Matt Ridenton, Jason Hicks and Alex Rufer available in midfield.

Up front All White Tyler Boyd and Costa Rican international Kenny Cunningham give him top-class striking alternatives.

"We've had a really good pre-season this time in with games against the two EPL teams and three A-League sides," Merrick said.

"Playing Sydney FC in Wollongong was a good measure for us and the draw was a fair result.

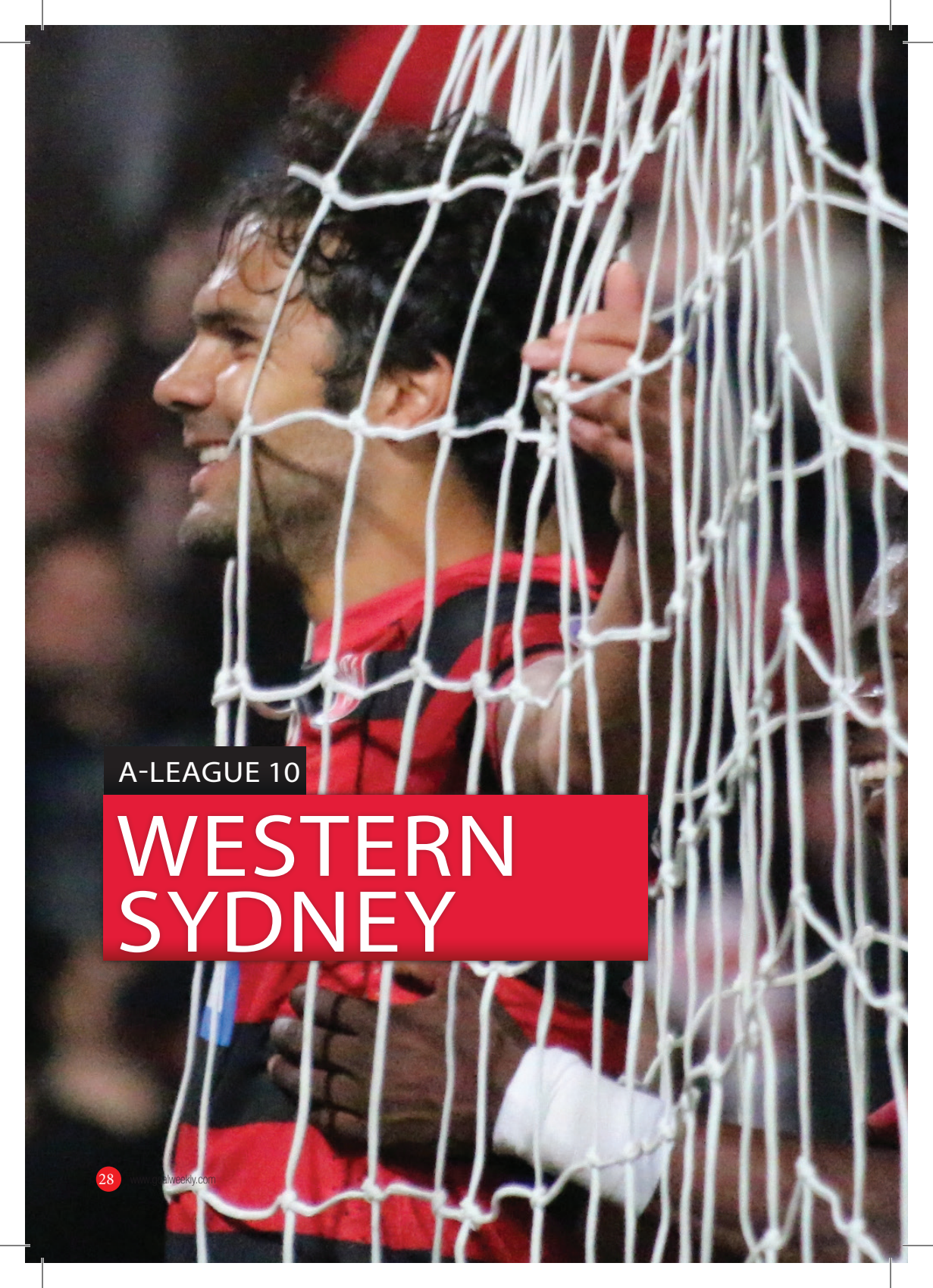
"It is important we get off to a good start to the season proper.

"I am not making any extravagant predictions but I can tell Phoenix fans we will make the playoffs."

1. Glen Moss
2. Manny Muscat
3. Reece Caira
4. Roly Bonevacia
5. Michael Boxall
6. Josh Brindell-South
7. Kenny Cunningham
8. Alejandro Gorriñ
9. Nathan Burns
10. Michael McGlinchey
11. Jeremy Brockie
12. Tyler Boyd
13. Albert Riera
14. Alex Rufer
15. Jason Hicks
16. Louis Fenton
17. Vince Lia
18. Ben Sigmund (vice-captain)
19. Tom Doyle
20. Lewis Italiano
21. Roy Krishna
22. Andrew Durante (captain)
23. Matthew Ridenton



Ernie Merrick holds high expectations for the Nix this season

A soccer player with dark, curly hair and a beard is seen in profile, smiling and celebrating. He is wearing a red and black striped jersey. He is positioned behind a white goal net, with his hands on the netting. The background is blurred, showing a stadium setting.

A-LEAGUE 10

WESTERN SYDNEY

Simon Maher

Wanderers on the March



On match days the Western Sydney Wanderers home ground Pirtek Stadium resembles a runaway pirate ship, red and black flags flying as it rocks and rolls on a sea of adrenalin charged emotion. Since storming into the A-League in 2012 the Wanderers have fiercely snatched whatever riches they have been able to get their hands on. Premiers in their maiden season of 2012-13, Grand Final runners up in 2012-13 and 2013-14, they now stand on the cusp of adding the Asian Champions League (ACL) to their glittering catalogue of successes. By any measure this progress during their two season A-League infancy has been astonishing, and it is hard to see the momentum slowing in Season 10 of the Hyundai A-League.

The Wanderers barnstorming progress has been built upon the bedrock of the meanest defence in the League. Coach Tony Popovic has moulded a parsimonious outfit who have conceded a stingy 50 goals in two seasons. By comparison profligate cross city rivals Sydney FC's goals against column sags with a weighty 89 goals over the same period.

When the Wanderers assembled to begin their 2014 Asian Champions League assault it seemed they may be facing the double edged sword of the taxing commitments of the AFC as well as the clubs first real turnover of players. Last season's Grand Final defeat by Brisbane Roar was the last game for many of the foundation heroes of the Wanderers, including captain Michael Beauchamp and the mercurial talisman Shinji Ono.

If ever they were going to reveal fragility, surely the rigours of the ACL would expose any flaws. However, the Wanderers have cruised in to the final of Asia's prestigious and lucrative Club Championship, overcoming every hurdle and going from strength to strength. Despite the departure of defensive stalwarts Beauchamp, Adam D'Apuzzo, and ever present Jerome Polenze, the Wanderers have repelled all that the big spending clubs of Asian club football could hurl at them during the gruelling hurly burly of the ACL. Including the sharpshooting of Guangzhou Evergrande's Italian footballing royalty, Alberto Gilardino and Alessandro Diamanti during the tumultuous ACL Home and Away Semi Final.

New signings Antony Golec, Daniel Mullen and Mark Hamill have settled in to their defensive responsibilities so smoothly that even the absence of recuperating World Cup hero Mathew Spiranovic has not created the vacuum that many anticipated. The red and black

spine of evergreen keeper Ante Covic, inspirational Captain Nikolai Topor-Stanley and mid field gate keepers Iacopo La Rocca and Mateo Poljak have proved as resilient as ever.

The Wanderers displays during the ACL reflect levels of professionalism and organisation which strongly suggest they will be capable of managing the sapping impact of an early start to their season, as well as the taxing impact of long haul travel and acclimatisation that the ACL demands.

Still one cannot help wondering if their successful participation in Asian club footballs Holy Grail may at some stage impact on their performances during the coming season. Historically A-League clubs have experienced mixed results in the aftermath of their ACL adventures.

One also wonders how they will handle the absence of crowd pleasers such as former Marquee Ono and Youssouf Hersi who supplied much of the Wanderers attacking creativity, not to mention their combined tally of 15 goals during their two year tenures.

On the plus side Tommy Juric looks poised to take his predatory instincts to new level of razor sharpness. New signing Brazilian Vitor Saba has sprinkled enough gold dust during his sporadic appearances to indicate that he may light up the A-League, but at this point remain a novice to the rigours of professional football. Mark Bridge and Labinot Haliti can be depended upon to contribute their attacking graft, but it may be the performances of Juric and Saba which will determine just how successful Popovic's buccaneers prove to be this season. If these two can ply their gilt edged craft consistently they will in all probability ensure the continuing triumphant advance of the red and black galleon during Season 2014-15 of the Hyundai A League.



Can Poppa's Pirates seize more A-League Gold?

1. Ante Covic
2. Shannon Cole
3. Daniel Mullen
4. Nikolai Topor-Stanley (Captain)
5. Brendan Hamill
6. Antony Golec
7. Labinot Haliti
8. Tomi Juric
10. Vitor Saba
11. Brendon Santalab
13. Matthew Spiranovic
14. Kwabena Appiah
15. Yianni Perikatis
17. Romeo Castelen
18. Iacopo La Rocca
19. Mark Bridge
20. Dean Bouzanis
23. Jason Trifiro
31. Alusine Fofanah
32. Daniel Alessi
34. .Golgol Mebrahtu
- TBC. Seyi Adeleke

INS:

Antony Golec (From ACL contract to HAL contract)
Dean Bouzanis (Carlisle United)
Vitor Saba (Brescia)
Brendan Hamill (Seongnam)
Romeo Castelen (RKC Wallwijk)
Seyi Adeleke (Lazio)



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Draw \$3.50	Victory 2
Wanderers \$3.50	Draw 1
	Wanderers 3

Kiss of Death
Victory 1-1 Wanderers

Did you know?

- WSW have scored in each of their last five games against Melbourne Victory in the A-League.

Blockbuster Kick-Off

Simon Maher

This Friday evening's clash at Etihad Stadium brings together two of the 'big boys' of the A-League. Just how big can be gauged by their achievements on and off the pitch.

Melbourne Victory boasts an imposing record of two Premierships and two Championships and is supported by the highest supporter base in the Hyundai A-League of over 17,500 fans.

Western Sydney Wanderers arrive in Melbourne tonight already carrying a Premiers Title as well as two consecutive Grand Final appearances albeit as runners up. They have the second highest number of members in the League with over 15,500 Red and Black devotees. This from a team entering its third season of A-League football! By any measure this fixture is "Big", but if we throw in respective Coaches Kevin Muscat of the Victory and Tony Popovic of the Wanderers we get a better idea. Stalwarts of the Socceroo's defence they ran up a cumulative total of 104 caps. Muscat also made 549 appearances across clubs such as Wol-

verhampton Wanderers, Rangers and Chrystal Palace, while Popovic made 421 appearances at club level, 123 of those wearing the maroon and blue of Chrystal Palace.

These Coaches are imposing men with proud professional careers and it is no surprise that their clubs are imbued with the same ambitions. By the final whistle we may have a clearer picture of which way these two and their charges will be headed in Season 10 of the A-League.

Victory's record is imposing but their last title was in 2009. Between their golden years of 2006 and 2010 they accumulated four trophies as well as an imposing presence in Australian football. Tough times arrived with five coaches filling the hot seat after the exit of Ernie Merrick in 2011. The premature departure of Ange Postecoglue last season posed another big challenge for Victory but it is one that Muscat has the experience to tackle.

Muscat will be striving to build on the fourth spot he steered the Blue and Whites into last season. Their purchase

of prolific goal scorer Besart Berisha is a major coup and he and pacey Connor Payne will test the Wanderers miserly defence. All of Carl Valeri's experience will be needed to guide new signing Ben Khalfallah through a midfield battle against two of the Leagues wildest competitors Iacopo La Rocca and Mateo Poljak.

The Victory will be hoping that towering 1.95 metre tall Frenchman Matthieu Delpierre will continue to settle into a defence that will be stretched by Labinot Haliti and the dazzling Brazilian Vitor Saba.

The Wanderers arrive on a wave of Asian Championships success, but this game will show how they are coping with the extra demands of the ACL. A packed house at Etihad will ensure them a tough night, but one gets the feeling that the pressure on the home team to make a bright start may be greater.

The team that holds their nerve should get the points, but don't discount a draw.

• Victory have failed to win any of their last seven opening round fixtures (D5 L2), while WSW have drawn both of theirs.

• Both teams have netted in four of six league meetings between these sides

Mariners v Newcastle Jets

Sat 11 Oct CC Stdm KO 5:00

Head to Head



The Odds	Games 27
Mariners \$2.15	Mariners 10
Draw \$3.40	Draws 10
Newcastle \$3.30	Newcastle 7

Kiss of Death
Mariners 2-1 Jets

Did you know?

- Central Coast Mariners are unbeaten in their last five A-League games against Newcastle (W3 D2).

Flores adds spice to F3 Derby

Kareem Mohamed

If there wasn't already enough drama in the league's oldest rivalry, the Jet's signing of ex-Mariners playmaker, Marcos Flores, has surely stoked the derby fire ahead of their opening round clash. The former Johnny Warren medalist sustained a season-ending ACL injury earlier this year, which led to Phil Moss pursuing other midfield options for the remainder of the season. Throughout his rehabilitation, Flores made no secret of his desire to remain on the coast following his anticipated return from injury. However what eventually transpired left both Flores and the Mariners faithful greatly disappointed. Whilst Flores has spoken out about his controversial departure, Phil Moss has refused to be drawn into a war of words, instead re-iterating on countless occasions that Flores was let go for purely footballing reasons. Make no mistake, Flores will have a point to prove come this Saturday afternoon. And don't be surprised to see Mariners supporters sing his name at some point during the match in what would be a rare feature in a traditionally hostile match.

Both sides have opted to focus on youth development in recent years, and it was only 12 months ago that

Taggart and Duke were fighting for a seat on the plane to Brazil. Taggart took his chance with a prolific season in front of goal, whilst Duke struggled after being shifted out wide early on in the season. Taggart has since moved onto Europe, whilst Duke remains in the A-league with a burning desire to restate his claim for the Soccerooos number 9 jersey. The Jets will surely miss the Golden boot winner, with their new coach highlighting the need for the Jets to share the goal scoring burden this season. Meanwhile Duke is favourite to lead the line for the Mariners this season, returning to his favoured position upfront where he will look to hit the ground running. This game will mark Phil Stubbins' A-league debut in the managerial hot-seat following Van Egmond's dismissal last season. Stubbins is the only debutant A-league coach this season, and as such he remains an unknown quantity. He has stated an intention to play a possession based game but time will tell if Newcastle have the ability to implement such a style in the burgeoning A-league landscape. The Mariner's two new midfield imports, Malick Mane and Richárd Vernes, could make their debuts in the

match but it may take them time to settle in before they are able to hit their stride. The same might apply for the Jet's two new import signings Edson Montaño and Johnny Steele. Jeronimo Neumann however will be keen to make an instant impact for the Jets. The Jets have injuries to Ben Kantarovski and Billy Celeski, which along with the off-season departures of Zadkovich and Brillante could see them forced to field a makeshift midfield pairing of Jacob Pepper and Taylor Regan. The Mariners on the other hand have no major injury concerns, with the biggest decision for Phil Moss being which player to leave out of his midfield pairing; captain John Hutchinson, defensive lynchpin Montgomery or young playmaker Anthony Caceres. He may even choose to field all three in an attempt to dominate the midfield battle and take control of the game. Despite the Mariners boasting a superior head to head record, they have never been able to win the opening F3 derby of the season with 7 draws and 2 losses. However, with the Mariners experiencing their least disruptive off-season for several years, they should prove too strong for the new look Jets' side.

Sydney FC v Melbourne City

Sat 11 Oct Allianz KO 7:45



The Odds	Head to Head
Sydney FC \$2.50	Played 12
Draw \$3.45	Sydney FC 3
Melb City \$2.70	Draws 5
	Melb City 4

Kiss of Death
Sydney FC 3-2 Melbourne City

Did you know?

- Six of the last 10 A-League meetings (incl. playoffs) between these two sides in Sydney have ended in a draw.

It's Bling v Bling

Alex Porter

With a new season comes new expectations, new hopes and new goals. However the expectations have arguably never been so high as they are now for two of the A-league's most glamorous clubs at the start of season 2014/15. Sydney Football Club, the original Bling FC, will take on Melbourne City, the re-branded and re-designed side that has the financial backing of Manchester City no less, in a mouth watering clash of substance and style at Allianz Stadium on October 11th.

This match up is one of contrasting styles, at least on the surface. In one corner sits Sydney FC, the two time A-league champions with a reputation for having preferred style over substance in the past. A highlight reel of marquee signings from Dwight Yorke to Benito Carbone and Alessandro Del Piero has been replaced with a squad that prioritises keeping goals out at one end and putting them in the net at the other as more important than the number of microphones at a media conference. This is no longer the Alessandro Del Piero show. Despite the huge boost to the profile of the harbour city club there can be little debate

that his presence was often counter effective as opposition teams looked to shut him out of games, thereby closing the gate on Sydney's plans A through Z. In contrast, new Coach Graham Arnold has built a roster with all the hallmarks of side that will go deep into the finals series. Exciting attacking talents like the mercurial Bernie Ibini, the A-league's two time Golden Boot winner Shane Smeltz and the return of the prodigal son Alex Brosque along side new Marquee man Marc Janko will line up in front of a composed back line that includes former Socceroo Sasa Ognjenovski as well as young talents like Pedj Boji and Matthew Jurman to name a few. There is no denying that Sydney have flattered to deceive in the past despite their two previous A-league Championships but as season 2014/15 kicks off there is an excitement in the air in Sydney that has not been felt for some time. Fans of the Sky Blues believe this team is one that can turn around the misfortunes of the past and starting October 11th, the new look Sydney FC will look to prove them right.

In the other corner though sits Melbourne City. Formerly known as

Melbourne Heart and with just one finals appearance in their four years in the competition it would be easy to assume this was a club who would once again struggle. However when the might of Manchester City stepped in, providing players of the calibre of David Villa, a World Cup and Champions League winner with Spain and Barcelona respectively, not to mention a change of club name and playing strip, the entire landscape of the A-league was altered and all eyes will be on Allianz Stadium to see how this particular arm of the Manchester City global conglomerate fares. A team that has historically struggled will look to assert its dominance on the pitch with David Villa, a 10 game guest in the A-league, ably supported by ex-Chelsea man Damien Duff and the quicksilver David Williams under the guidance of returning Coach Johan Van't Schip.

The A-league may only be ten years old but in Sydney FC and Melbourne City are two teams that have already worn many masks. When their seasons kick off on October 11th, they'll look to start fresh all over again. Will the real Bling FC please stand up.

Phoenix v Perth Glory

Sun 12 Oct Westpac KO 5:00



The Odds	Head to Head
Phoenix \$2.40	Played 22
Draw \$3.40	Phoenix 9
Perth \$2.85	Draws 6
	Perth 7

Kiss of Death
Phoenix 1-1 Glory

Did you know?

- Both teams have scored in each of the last four A-League games between Wellington and Perth Glory.

Phoenix awaits Glory

Joshua Hercus

The campaign for Wellington and Perth kicks off at 3pm October 12th at Westpac Stadium with both sides looking to make a positive start after a long preseason campaign.

Both sides have strengthened their line ups with Perth in particular ushering in a new look counter attacking side under Kenny Lowe. With the additions of Mitch Nichols on loan, Ruben Zadkovich and Youssef Hersi in the midfield as well as defensive stalwart Dino Djulbic returning to the club Perth will look to overcome a disappointing season last time round.

The star signing in the off season has been Andy Keogh from English side Millwall with the preseason showing off his prowess in front of goal and will be looked to lead the line after the departure of one of the A League leading strikers in Shane Smeltz who has moved to Sydney FC. Michael Thwaite one of the Glory's

key players has stressed the importance of Perth being able to travel well after last season suffering from so many poor results away from home.

With pre season trips already to Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney used to specifically combat the travel factor. Wellington Phoenix on the other hand will be looking to two time A League champion coach Ernie Merrick to help guide a young and talented squad to push for a top six finish.

Merrick side will look to move into a more fluid passing game rather than his usual crash and bash teams that he has coached in the past.

The path has finally been cleared for New Zealand international Michael McGlinchey to be the dynamo in the midfield for the Phoenix with his exploits shown in their 6 to 2 win over local Canterbury United for their last pre season hit out.

Albert Reira will once again be looked to help build on a good first season and with less international disruptions this time round Tyler Boyd and Louis Fenton will be asked to be mainstays of this side.

So far a preseason victory over English Premier League side West Ham gives the team confidence heading to the season whoever the big worry is where the goals will come from.

Jeremy Brockie who has bounced around the league for a number of seasons will look to carry that burden alongside Paul Iffill who will hope to return to the dazzling heights of his early A League season career.

With this being the first fixture for the season it is hard to predict how much either side has improved since their last campaign.

However Perth will be looking to start with an improved away performance and will be confident of at least getting a draw.

34 www.goalweekly.com

• Glory have won only one of their previous 12 A-League away trips to Wellington Phoenix (L6 D5 W1).

• Wellington have won one of seven opening round fixtures since 2007 (D4 L2).

Brisbane Roar v Adelaide Utd

Sun 12 Oct Suncorp KO 4:00



The Odds	Head to Head
Brisbane \$1.75	Played 29
Draw \$3.75	Brisbane 11
Adelaide \$4.50	Draws 8
	Adelaide 10

Kiss of Death

Brisbane 2-2 Adelaide

Did you know?

- Brisbane Roar have won five of their last six A-League games against Adelaide United (L1).

Champs host Reds

Jarrod Ellis

Reigning A-League Champions Brisbane Roar kick-off their title defence this Sunday against Adelaide United at Suncorp Stadium.

It will have been five months since Brisbane were crowned A-League Champions at the very same venue when the two sides take to the pitch.

The Roar remain largely unchanged since their Premiership-Championship double winning feats of last season but for many it will be the first look at Brisbane in the post-Besart Berisha era.

The Albanian has been the club's leading goal scorer since his arrival in 2012 and was the difference between victory and defeat for his side on more than one occasion.

His absence could be keenly felt and it will be interesting to see how Brisbane copes with his absence. Mensur Kurtishi has been signed as his direct replacement but if preseason is any indication then the Roar look to have altered their attack, the front three interchanging far more than in the past.

Ivan Franjic has also moved on whilst Michael Theo will be missing due to a broken wrist. That will mean an A-League debut between the sticks for Jamie Young, the Australian-born England youth international signed by

the Roar earlier this year.

Young has already played for Brisbane in the FFA Cup and was the keeper for the club's exit two weeks ago against their very same opponents this Sunday.

That match finished 2-0 on the day and Brisbane were lucky to leave Coopers Stadium with that scoreline such as Adelaide's superiority.

Goals from Bruce Djite and Sergio Cirio sealed that result but it was the performance of Isaias Sanchez that truly caught the eye. The Spanish midfielder put in an imperious performance, dominating the play from a deep laying holding midfielder's role.

If Brisbane wish to get something out of this match they'll need to stop him above all others.

After that match the Roar had two squad meetings to discuss their failings and it should prove interesting to see what kind of a response that provokes.

FFA Cup aside Brisbane had hardly had an easy time of it of late against Adelaide. The style of play implemented by Josep Gombau is similar to that of Brisbane's and is not something the Roar is typically used to coming up against. The past four matchups between these two sides have resulted in two wins apiece but arguably on each occasion it's

been Adelaide that has looked the better football side.

Being the better football side doesn't always guarantee three points but with this being Gombau's second season in charge we should all expect the Reds to be a genuine force this time around. Geronimo Neumann may have left but Adelaide have looked to replace him with Spanish striker Pablo Sanchez Alberto. A history in the Spanish second tier is hardly overwhelming but Gombau's signings have proved adept so far and it should come as no surprise should Alberto prove to be one of the A-League's top strikers.

It's in defence though that Adelaide has been exposed in the past and the Reds will need to tighten up at the back if they're to ensure a result at Suncorp Stadium.

With Gombau having implemented a 3-4-3 formation for the majority of preseason we can expect an entertaining match, Adelaide being unlikely to arrive with a draw in mind.

Brisbane will be looking to make amends for recent defeats in front of their home crowd and after claiming all silverware on offer last season there's enough talent in the squad to get things off to a perfect start on Sunday.

Blast From The Past



Gary Cole

Words: Alvaro Rodriguez
Photo: Les Shorrock Collection, Deakin University

Melbourne, October 21st 1979 - Victorian State XI vs. New York Cosmos. Then-Socceroo (and future-Melbourne Victory powerbroker) Gary Cole jostles with Cosmos opponent Nelsi Morais (right) for the ball during a 5-goal thriller at Olympic Park which saw the touring American glamour-side cancel out the Vics' 2-0 lead with three 2nd-half goals in 8 minutes. Though Pelé had retired by then, the NASL powerhouse still boasted Der Kaiser himself, Franz Beck-

enbauer as well as ex-Lazio star Giorgio Chinaglia, Brazil's 1970 WC-winning captain Carlos Alberto and Dutchman Johan Neeskens (who'd go on to become Socceroos assistant-coach under Guus Hiddink). For their part, the Big V lineup boasted current and future Socceroos in Jimmy Rooney, Yakka Banovic, Jimmy Tansey, John Yzendoorn and Jamie Paton in addition to Cole.



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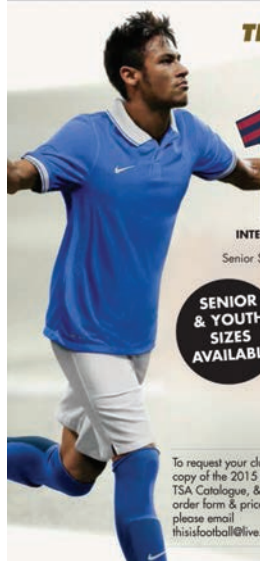
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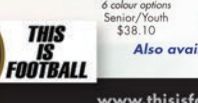




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**Palm Beach Sharks (QLD) v
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Tuesday, 14 October 2014
CBUS Super Stadium, Robina,
QLD.
Kick off 6:30 (local)

**Sydney FC (NSW) v
Adelaide United (SA)**

Tuesday, 21 October 2014
Allianz Stadium, Sydney, NSW.
Kick off 7:30 (local)

**Bentleigh Greens (VIC) v
Adelaide City (SA)**

Wednesday, 29 October 2014
Kingston Heath Soccer Complex,
Melbourne, VIC.
Kick off 7:30 (local)

**Perth Glory (WA) v
Melbourne Victory (VIC)**

Wednesday, 29 October 2014
niB Stadium, Perth, WA.
Kick off 7:00 (local)

Greens confident of extending cup run

SHAUN MORAN @moranshaun

BENTLEIGH Greens coach John Anastasiadis believes that his side's preparation for their upcoming FFA Cup quarter-final bout against Adelaide City has not been disrupted despite the NPL Victoria's conclusion four weeks ago.

The Greens, whose last competitive match was the Round of 16 tie against Sydney Olympic on September 16 are not taking the foot off the pedal as they seek to overcome their South Australian state-league opponents.

"All is going well," Anastasiadis said. "We're trying to keep players motivated by not only training but playing some games. We know what's at stake so the boys have been pretty good about the FFA Cup and they can't wait to play. "We do have a reasonable training schedule which will keep us in good stead for the upcoming game."

Victoria's only remaining member federation club is hoping to benefit on and off the field on the back of the FFA Cup juggernaut coming to Cheltenham's humble surrounds.

Moreover, he is predicting a well-drilled Adelaide side who have so far demonstrated their adeptness in high pressure matches.

"For us it would be a massive achievement and I believe that all the exposure

it has generated can only benefit us in the long term, financially especially," he revealed.

"I expect Adelaide to be cautious as we probably will be.

"They are a very good team, quite fast and mobile I believe. [Damian] Mori has created a great culture at the famous club and his team plays the way he played – as winners."

A home leg is something that the former South Melbourne boss is relishing after playing both the Round of 32 and 16 matches on the road against Blacktown City and Sydney Olympic respectively.

"It's certainly a relief to play at home," he admitted.

"It will give our supporters and others alike to see the FFA Cup in their own backyard and see why it has created so much interest around the country."

Their plucky opponents led by former Socceroo Damian Mori will also fancy their chances of a semi-final berth following their conquests of last season's A-League Grand finalists and Asian Champions League finalists the Western Sydney Wanderers and more recently the Brisbane Strikers.

In the other matches, the Palm Beach Sharks of Queensland will face a tough task against the Central Coast Mariners

in Robina. The Sharks have swept aside Hakoah Sydney City East and South Springvale on route to the final eight, but know that a tougher task awaits upon the Mariners' arrival in town.

Arguably the game of the round sees Hyundai A-League powerhouses Sydney FC and Adelaide United pitted against each other.

Sydney's run so far has seen it claim the scalp of Melbourne City in Ballarat, before overpowering Sydney United 58 FC in last month's Sydney derby. Adelaide's draw has been far from easy after both Wellington Phoenix and Brisbane Roar fell victim to them in the South Australian capital.

Melbourne's second representative, Melbourne Victory will make the trip across the Nullarbor for the second time to face Kenny Lowe's revamped Perth Glory. The Victory have knocked out Bayswater City and Tuggeranong United on their way and will be looking to go deeper into the competition with a win away from home once again.

Glory dealt with a spirited St Albans outfit after taking down the Jets in the preceding round. A strong pre-season for both teams is sure to make for a fiercely-fought encounter.



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Pictured (left to right): Milos Lujic (South Melbourne - PS4 NPL Gold Medal), Tiffany Eliadis (South Melbourne Women's FC - Sportsmart WPL Gold Medal) and Sean Seavill (Dandenong City - PS4 NPL 1 Best and Fairest). Image by Anita Milas.

LUJIC & TAYLOR TAKE TOP NPL HONOURS AT FFV GOLD MEDAL NIGHT

George Kouroumalis

A record breaking 2014 season has concluded with South Melbourne once again dominating Victorian Football by taking out all of the major honours at the FFV Gold Medal Night at the Grand Hyatt last Friday evening.

After winning the inaugural PS4 NPL Victoria Championship by 7 points from second placed Oakleigh Cannons, South Melbourne players were widely tipped to poll well in the annual FFV Gold Medal Award.

The night started with coach Chris Taylor being awarded the 2014 PS4 NPL Victoria Coach of the Year. This was Taylor's third Coach of the Year award, having won the award previously on two occasions in 2008 (Melbourne Knights) and 2012 (Dandenong Thunder).

As expected Milos Lujic accepted his award as the 2014 PS4 NPL Victoria Golden Boot winner after scoring a phenomenal 22 goals in 26 league games. He also managed to equal the club record previously set by Jim Armstrong (22 league goals in 1974) and Doug Brown (22 league goals in 1984) in any one league season.

In a remarkable night for the star striker, Lujic was then awarded with the 2014 PS4 NPL Victoria Players' Player Award. This award was voted by his fellow peers in the NPL Victoria competition and clearly shows the impression that Lujic had left on his opponents throughout a dominant 2014 season.

Finally to top off an amazing night for Lujic, he was awarded the 2014 PS4 NPL Victoria Gold Medal award as the Best and Fairest Player in the competition. Lujic finished the count on 24 votes, one behind Heidelberg United's Daniel Heffernan who was ineligible to win the award due to being suspended during the year. Former South winger Goran Zoric finished just behind Lujic on 22 votes, while midfield workhorse Iqi Jawadi was South's next best performer finishing the count on 17 votes.

A humble and appreciative Lujic took to twitter to thank the South fans following the historic night stating "Wow still cant believe the awards I won last night! Personally its been the best year I've had in my career. Thank you" Lujic is the second South Melbourne player to win the prestigious FFV Gold Medal, with Fernando De Moraes capturing the award in a stunning 2010 season for the club.

The Club would like to congratulate both Milos Lujic and Chris Taylor on what was a successful 2014 NPL Victoria championship season.

Furthermore, South Melbourne FC would also like to congratulate SMWFC player Tiffany Elliadis who became the first ever player in WPL history to claim back-to-back Golden Boot and Gold Medal Awards.

PS4 NPL Gold Medal leaderboard:

25 – Daniel Heffernan (Heidelberg United)*

24 – Milos Lujic (South Melbourne)

23 – Goran Zoric (Oakleigh Cannons)

18 – Jake Nakic (Pascoe Vale)

17 – Matthew Millar (Dandenong Thunder), Wayne Wallace (Bentleigh Greens), Iqbal Jawadi (South Melbourne)

*ineligible due to suspension

PS4 NPL Gold Medal – Milos Lujic (South Melbourne)

PS4 NPL 1 Goalkeeper of the Year – Alexander Pavlidis (Box Hill United)

Sportsmart WPL Gold Medal – Tiffany Eliadis (South Melbourne Women's FC)

Sportsmart WPL Players' Player of the Year – Enza Barilla (Bundoora United)

Sportsmart WPL Coach of the Year – John Kyrgios (Heidelberg United)

MEDIA AWARDS

Bill Fleming Award (media's player of the year) –

Wayne Wallace (Bentleigh Greens) and Nathaniel Foster (Oakleigh Cannons)

Les Shorrock Best Football Image – Graeme Furlong
Best News Article – David Manuca (FourFourTwo Australia)

Victorian Referee of the Year - Patrick Chaplin

2014 FFV Hall of Fame inductees - Deborah Nichols, Arthur Gibbs and Oscar Crino

PS4 NPL Players' Player of the Year – Milos Lujic (South Melbourne)

PS4 NPL Golden Boot – Milos Lujic (South Melbourne)
Lujic scored 22 goals in 26 games to finish four ahead of Heidelberg United's Daniel Heffernan.

PS4 NPL Coach of the Year – Chris Taylor (South Melbourne)

PS4 NPL Rising Star – Matthew Millar (Dandenong Thunder)

PS4 NPL Goalkeeper of the Year – Chris Oldfield (Hume City)

PS4 NPL 1 Best and Fairest – Sean Seavill (Dandenong City)

PS4 NPL Players' Player of the Year – Tom Cahill (Richmond)



National team's scene in review

By Pablo Bateson

It has been an amazing past five months for Australia's national football teams, as the countdown progresses to our biggest ever international tournament hosted in our multi-cultural nation.

With relatively low expectations from most fans and commentators, the Socceroos completed an unsuccessful campaign at the Brasil 2014 FIFA World Cup. Although some positives came from our participation, the bottom line is that the senior men's team lost all three group games, two of them by clear cut margins. Ange Postecoglou had every right to be disappointed, as fundamental flaws and deficiencies were exposed across the park.

The reality is that naïve defensive lapses contributed to most of the goals conceded, and at the other end a number of golden opportunities were not converted on goal. At such a high level of football against three of the best teams on the world stage, quality and consistent execution is essential to get the all important results when it really matters.

That's certainly not to denigrate or lay blame at individual players like too many 'arm chair' fans did in terms of knee jerk excuses, responses and simplistic finger pointing. However, we learnt the hard way that this evolving, regenerating national squad has a long way to go before we equal and then exceed the performances of say the group that inspired us at the 2006 World Cup.

In response, Ange has already experimented with and introduced some exciting new and youthful talent into recent friendlies. Despite being outplayed to lose in Belgium, five days later the hint of a turnaround in form was shown with a much needed win over Asian Cup rivals Saudi Arabia. Patches of convincing attacking football were undermined by defensive lapses reflected in the narrow winning margin.

If we are to optimise the home turf advantage in January to finally win a major tournament trophy, the squad's preparation will need to have us in much better shape. This unique opportunity requires existing established star players to play at their highest capabilities and for the young guns to step up a couple of notches to perform consistently under pressure. This can be achieved under a coach that will leave nothing to chance through conditioning and methodical training, tactical and technical flexibility, and applying systems that reflect a sophisticated football philosophy.

The 2015 Asian Cup is ours to win if we get the above right, including 'making our own luck' along the way.

On the early mornings (AEST) of this Saturday and Wednesday, the Socceroos play 'friendlies' against UAE in Dubai and then Qatar in Doha. This will help to gauge where the squad is at in regard to opponents that will be very similar to those in our draw at the Asian Cup. Nothing short of winning an even sterner test in Osaka against the Blue Samurai, and likely only one further friendly in the week leading up to the Asian Cup tournament opener on 9 January at Melbourne's 'Rectangular Stadium' (AFC regulations don't permit using the usual sponsor's name).

There have been many other positive, interesting and exciting developments for our national teams, including the women's game and youth levels.

There has been turmoil and uncertainty times in recent for the head coaching role of the "Matildas". The departure in April of Hester de Reus after a dispute and unprecedented player mutiny with players over coaching methods was followed with the temporary appointment of Alen Stajcic.

In September, Stajcic was appointed on a longer term contract to lead the Westfield Matildas through the upcoming FIFA Women's World Cup (2015) and Olympic Games (2016)

campaigns after steering the Matildas to the final of the 2014 AFC Women's Asian Cup in the caretaker role. This recent turnaround in form and squad unity was demonstrated by another wonderful Asian Cup campaign, culminating in a 0-1 loss to reigning world champions Japan. Also, the Matildas have now returned to the top 10 of the FIFA world rankings.

At youth level, our "Joeys" qualified for next year's U17s FIFA World Cup to be held in Chile. They did this by reaching the semi-final of the AFC 16s Championship held in the very steamy conditions of Thailand. Of special note was a comprehensive 4-2 victory over Japan. A place in the final was denied only in a penalty shoot out by PRK (North Korea) who went on to win the title over South Korea. Han Berger, who recently completed a five year contract as National Technical Director, highlighted that this was the first cohort of national squad players to come right the FFA's "Skillaroos" program. Implementation of the National Curriculum is perhaps now just starting to be reflected in an emerging new generation of more technically adept players.

The "Young Socceroos" coached by Paul Okon will this month be playing in the U19s AFC Championship

hosted by Myanmar. Australian has drawn alongside Uzbekistan, UAE and Indonesia at the group stage, and has a squad comprised mainly of those from A-League ranks. Cameron Burgess (Fulham, England), Chris Ikononmidis (Lazio, Italy) and Peter Skapetis (Stoke City, England) are the three overseas-based players.

Last month, Our "Futsalroos" reached the final of the ASEAN Football Federation Futsal Championships in Malaysia only to lose to defending champions Thailand.

Despairingly, the "Pararoos" national funding of a modest \$175,000 per year was recently completely cut by the Federal government's Australian Sports Commission, in what appears to be a cynical and short sighted action to reduce expenditure. For a team that is ranked 12th in the world, pressure from across the football community has continued in the past three months to reverse this policy decision. In a public campaign being championed by a remarkable 12 year old in Claire Walls, let us hope that fairness and equality of opportunity prevails to restore such critical financial support for elite footballers playing with disabilities.



GOAL!
WEEKLY



HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE

CHAMPIONS
2014



Photo: ADRIAN GAGLIONE



Photo: Edin Telarevic

MetroStars Scoop NPL Title

South Australia's MetroStars SC are the PlayStation 4 National Premier Leagues 2014 Champions after a tense 1-0 win over Bonnyrigg White Eagles at Lambert Park in Leichhardt.

Former Adelaide United midfielder Fabian Barbiero's 4th minute strike proved the difference, capping off a memorable PlayStation 4 National Premier Leagues Finals Series for MetroStars SC, who defeated the Premiers from Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales all away from home on their way to being crowned the best PlayStation 4 National Premier Leagues club in the country.

MetroStars SC become the competition's second winners after Sydney United 58 FC claimed the inaugural title last year.

Notably, the result also earns MetroStars SC automatic entry into next year's Westfield FFA Cup Round of 32, while it also sends coach Ivan Karlovic off on the best possible note after he stated earlier this year that this would be his last in charge.

"We had a hiccup losing the (South Australian) Grand Final so we did see this as a great opportunity to band together and play another tournament,"

an ecstatic MetroStars SC captain Adam van Dommele said afterwards.

"All three games were very tough, we had our backs up against the wall in just about every game being away from home, so I couldn't be prouder of the group, they stuck tough."

"Bonnyrigg's coach brought up a good point that you could almost class yourselves as the next best team outside of the A-League by winning this competition so we obviously feel very proud of our achievement and I couldn't see a better way of sending out Ivan (Karlovic) and Lee Robertson, who have been two stalwarts of this club."

Van Dommele also expressed his excitement of the club securing a spot in next year's Westfield FFA Cup.

"It's great to know we'll be playing on the national stage once again and it's something to look forward to next year."

Both sides created a number of decent chances in an entertaining encounter, MetroStars SC having to absorb a second half surge from Bonnyrigg to hold on.

While they were on the wrong side of the score line, the Football NSW side did have something to celebrate with David Vrankovic awarded the John Kosmina Medal as the player of the match.

2014 Grand Final Review

**Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0
MetroStars SC 1 (Barbiero 4')
Saturday 4 October 2014
Lambert Park, Leichhardt NSW
Referee: Patrick Chaplin**

**Bonnyrigg White Eagles
starting line-up:** 1.James CHRONOPOULOS (GK), 4.David VRANKOVIC, 5.Chris TADROSSE (c), 6.Nikola ZONJIC, 8.Alexander CANAK (24.Alexander DOYLE 63'), 9.Robert YOUNIS, 10.Tynan DIAZ, 12.Dylan FOX, 18.Adrian UCCHINO (2.Alexander MANSUETO 73'), 19.Aaron PETERSON, 21.Bo Hyun CHUN, 26.Terek ERCAN

Substitutes not used: 13.Adam JENNER, 17.Mitchell OSMOND, 22.Liam GOBBO (GK)

Yellow cards: Uccchino 16', Vrankovic 33'

Red cards: Nil

MetroStars SC starting line-up:

20.Daniel GODLEY (GK), 2.David MENECHHELLA (8.Rocky CALLISTO 60'), 5.Lee ROBERTSON, 6.Anthony SOLAGNA, 7.Michael D'ALOISIO, 9.Steven GRELLI, 11.Scott TUNBRIDGE (10.Andrew CIARLA 90+4'), 18.Fabian BARBIERO, 19.Joseph POLISENA, 21.Adam VAN DOMMELE (c), 23.Perry MITRIS

Substitutes not used: 3.Stefan CALI, 15.Lawrence D'ARRIGO, 30.Lindsay PATTERSON (GK)

Yellow cards: Nil

Red cards: Nil



GOAL!
WEEKLY

10 YEARS TOGETHER AND STILL GOING STRONG!

A black and white photograph of a soccer player's foot in a cleat, positioned as if about to kick a soccer ball. The image is partially obscured by the large text overlay.

Football Comes Of Age
GW & A-League 10TH Anniversary